

Profile of a Fool

Fool *n.* 1. One who shows himself, by words or actions, to be deficient in judgement, sense, or understanding; a stupid or thoughtless person. 2. One who acts unwisely on a given occasion.

Although the above definition describes a fool in today's modern English, the word has a different meaning in the Bible. Fools, as described in Proverbs, may have a high IQ or be successful and admired, but they are a disaster waiting to happen.

Jan Silvious, noted author and counselor, outlined the profile of a fool (based on the description in Proverbs) at a recent women's conference, and will be releasing a new book on this subject in August 1998. Jan compared a difficult person (fool) to coarse sandpaper: "A few swipes up against a fool and you'll be destroyed."

What does a fool look like?

- ◆ **He is always right.** "The way of a fool seems right to him . . ." Proverbs 12:15
- ◆ **He trusts in his own heart.** "He who trusts in himself is a fool." Proverbs 28:26
- ◆ **He doesn't learn from past mistakes, and is chronically foolish.** "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly." Proverbs 26:11
- ◆ **He doesn't want to change.** "Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him." Proverbs 27:22
- ◆ **He will not listen to reason.** "Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words." Proverbs 23:9
- ◆ **He is motivated by anger.** "A fool gives full vent to his anger . . ." Proverbs 29:11
- ◆ **He is opinionated.** "A fool finds no

delight in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions." Proverbs 18:2

- ◆ **He invites violence.** "A fool's lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating." Proverbs 18:4

Do you know someone like this? If so, here are some words of wisdom for you.

- ◆ **Watch who you associate with!** "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man; do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared." Proverbs 22:24-25
- ◆ **Don't rescue a fool!** "A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again." Proverbs 19:19
- ◆ **Warning—Danger Ahead!** "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." Proverbs 13:22 (The word "harm" means *total destruction*.)
- ◆ **Stay away from a fool!** "Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly." Proverbs 17:12

It is not always possible to stay away from a fool because he may be your husband, son, father, or brother (mother, daughter, or sister too!). Jan Silvious gives three key strategies for dealing with the fool you love and must live with:

- ◆ **Detach!** "Go from the presence of a foolish man . . ." Proverbs 14:7

To detach means to back off far enough to leave the presence of an angry person until the anger has passed. You can also remain in the same room and emotionally detach from hurtful words by reminding yourself of the truth from God's Word which will protect and guard your emotions and feelings.

"Treat them like a stranger," advises Jan Silvious, adding, "be kind, don't

get involved in their stuff, and don't let them get involved in your stuff."

- ◆ **Forgive them!** "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:31-32

Forgiveness means to send away your right to punish, and leave vengeance to God. It does not mean that trust is rebuilt or a relationship is restored. It does not mean that the other person even receives your forgiveness. But it does release you from bitterness and sets you free to enjoy the rest of your life.

- ◆ **Pray for them!** "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." Romans 8:26.

Instead of telling God how to fix it, we should be quiet in His presence and allow God to work in His time and in His own way. Besides, our prayers may be quite self-serving when we ask God to zap our fool with a lightning bolt right between the eyes!

My favorite verse about a fool is found in Proverbs 29:9: "If a wise man (or woman) goes to court with a fool, the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace (or justice!)." Proverbs 29:9

Read the entire book of Proverbs for a complete profile of a fool and wise instructions on how to deal with them. Share these verses with your children to prepare them for all the fools who will cross their path. This wisdom will be more valuable than a college education or a rich cash legacy!